

(c) supplying process air to the different process steps from beneath the fluidizing space, wherein a different process air stream is provided to the fluidizing space by each of at least two chambers in an air inflow area beneath the fluidizing space;

(d) supplying components selected from a binder, water and/or one or more other materials to the solid starting material in the fluidizing space;

(e) fluidizing the starting material and components in the fluidizing space to form a solid mixture comprising granulates or agglomerates of homogenous composition;

(f) reducing a flow speed of the process air in an expansion zone located above the fluidizing space, such that particles entrained in the process air from the fluidizing space are pre-separated and returned to the fluidizing space; and

(g) separating process dust with a dedusting mechanism adjoining above the expansion zone.

5. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the at least two chambers are arranged one after another in a horizontal direction of the fluidized bed to provide the different process air streams sequentially to the fluidizing space.

6. (New) The process according to claim 5, wherein the starting material is supplied at one end of the fluidizing space and the granulates or agglomerates of homogenous composition are discharged from an opposite end of the fluidizing space, such that some of the different process steps are performed sequentially in the horizontal direction.

7. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein a first chamber provides process air at a temperature of about 20° C up to a decomposition temperature of individual components of the product for agglomeration of the product, and a second process chamber provides process air at a temperature of about -20° C to 30° C for colling the agglomerated product.

8. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the components supplied in step (d) are supplied by a spray or injection system.

9. (New) The process according to claim 8, wherein the components supplied in step (d) are supplied in a spray medium comprising up to 100% dry material.

10. (New) The process according to claim 8, wherein the components supplied in step (d) are supplied over an entire process range.

11. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the components supplied in step (d) are supplied in a form selected from solutions, suspensions and melts.

12. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the components supplied in step (d) are supplied from above the fluidizing space.

13. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the expansion zone is formed by cross-sectional widenings of the fluidized bed.

14. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the dedusting mechanism of step (g) is in an integrated filter system.

15. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the process dust separated in step (g) is returned to the fluidizing space.

16. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the fluidizing space is separated from the chambers in the air inflow area by an air distribution plate.

17. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the different process air streams exit the fluidized bed as one exhaust gas stream.

18. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the product comprises about 1 to 35% binder including moisture.

19. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein supplying the starting material to and discharging the product from the fluidized bed are performed under pressure seal from the environment.

20. (New) The process according to claim 4, wherein the product is an industrial detergent or industrial detergent component.

21. (New) The process according to claim 20, wherein the product is a finished product. —

REMARKS

Claims 4-21 are presently pending in the application.

Independent claim 1 has been rewritten as new independent claim 4 in which step (c) has been amended to clarify that a different process air stream is provided to the fluidizing space by each of at least two chambers in an air inflow area beneath the fluidizing space. This feature is illustrated in the figure of the drawings and described, for example, at page 5, lines 5-10 and Examples 1 and 2 at pages 7 and 8 of the specification. In particular, process air 1 is supplied through chambers 10 in air inflow section I beneath the fluidizing space II. As shown in the drawing, there are three chambers 10. Specific Examples 1 and 2 use two air stream chambers, namely an agglomeration air chamber and a cooling air chamber, but of course, more chambers could be used depending upon the number of different process steps and the differences in the process air required for the different steps.

In addition, a number of non-essential features have been removed from the independent claim and inserted in new dependent claims. For example, the specification of the agglomeration and cooling air temperatures originally in step (c) are now in claim 7; the preferred features of supplying additional components in step (d) are now in dependent claims 8-11; the cross-sectional widenings of the expansion zone in step (f) are now in claim 13; the integrated filter system and the return of the process dust to the fluidizing space according to step (g) are now in claims 14 and 15; and the preferred products manufactured by the process, originally set forth in the preamble of claim 1, are now in claims 20 and 21. The subject matter of original claims 2 and 3 is now in claims 18 and 19.